

# meeting summary

## First Ward Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy A NYS Brownfield Opportunity Area Program

February 18, 2014 | Neighborhood Visioning Workshop

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### Meeting Attendees

Approximately 40 people were in attendance.

### Materials provided

- Meeting Agenda
- Neighborhood Visioning Survey (hard copies)

### Meeting Overview

Kimberly Baptiste of Bergmann Associates welcomed the group to the project's first public meeting. She outlined the agenda for the meeting and introduced the project team, including City staff and consultants from Bergmann Associates, Camion Associates, Herron Consulting (and Bruce Harvey Consulting, who was not present). The meeting agenda included a presentation that explained the BOA Program and described key findings about the First Ward, followed by an interactive visioning exercise. The meeting concluded with announcements about upcoming events, including a Design Workshop that will take place in June, and other opportunities for the public to stay involved in the project, such as visiting the project website for regular updates and taking an online survey: <http://firstwardboa.binghamton-ny.gov/>.



*Meeting participants placed pins to show where they live in the First Ward*

## Presentation of the BOA Program and the First Ward Revitalization Strategy

Kimberly provided a brief overview of the New York State BOA Program, which is a three-step process that includes a pre-nomination study, a nomination study and an implementation strategy. The purpose of the program is to provide financial and technical assistance to communities for area-wide revitalization strategies in neighborhoods impacted by the presence of brownfields and environmental hazards. The City of Binghamton completed step one in 2010.

Kimberly explained that the First Ward Revitalization Strategy is the second step in the three-step process. She described each of the key components of the First Ward Revitalization Strategy, which are:

1. Reinvestment
2. Neighborhood Stabilization
3. Public Realm
4. Flooding
5. Charles Street Business Park
6. Historic Preservation
7. Environmental Site Assessment

## The First Ward: What We've Learned

Kimberly presented key findings about the First Ward neighborhood of today. These were based on an analysis of the First Ward's demographics, history and current land uses and landscape. A copy of the presentation can be accessed on the project website.

## Interactive Exercise: The First Ward "In a Word"

Sue Hopkins of Bergmann Associates led an interactive exercise in which meeting attendees were asked to contribute ideas to a vision for the First Ward Revitalization Strategy. Participants were prompted to provide single word answers to the following three questions about the First Ward: (1) what is the First Ward's greatest strength (2) what is the First Ward's most needed improvement (3) how do you want to be able to describe the First Ward in 20 years? Participants wrote their words on construction paper (in colors corresponding to each question) and then posted their responses on the wall.



*Participants writing down their vision for the First Ward "In a Word"*



*Participants posting their words to the wall*

Attendees then engaged in a facilitated discussion of their collective ideas, followed by an informal ranking exercise designed to help prioritize the results. Below is a summary of the concepts and words, as prioritized by participants. A full list of the responses is attached.

**The First Ward's Greatest Strength:**

- Tight-knit neighborhood/community
- Diversity/versatility
- Walkability/accessibility/location

**The First Ward's Most Needed Improvement:**

- Aesthetic improvements & investment in properties
- Business development/industrial development
- Enhanced code enforcement
- Parks & green space

**The First Ward 20 Years from Now:**

- Business revitalization
- Sustainable
- Prepared for floods/dry

At the conclusion of the workshop, Sue explained that City staff and the consulting team will incorporate the results of this exercise into a draft vision for the First Ward Revitalization Strategy. The team will present the draft to the Steering Committee for discussion and will make modifications based on the Steering Committee's feedback.

**Project Updates**

Kimberly invited meeting attendees to visit the First Ward Revitalization Strategy Website (<http://firstwardboa.binghamton-ny.gov/>). From the website, residents and stakeholders can sign up for the project mailing list, fill out the visioning survey and review project materials. The website can be accessed by computer, smartphone and tablet.

**Next Steps**

**Consultant Team:**

- Complete Market Study, Economic Analysis and Flood Control Study
- Collect and Analyze Neighborhood Visioning Survey
- Compile findings from 30+ Stakeholder Interviews
- Ongoing Website Updates

**Steering Committee:**

- Meeting #3: March 20th, 2014 at 6:00 pm, First Ward Senior Center

**Upcoming Public Engagement Activities:**

- Public Design Workshop: June, 2014 (tentative)

## Presentation and Visioning Exercise – February 18, 2014



## Visioning Exercise - Detailed Responses

Greatest Strength	stickers	Most Needed Improvement	stickers	Description 20 Years From Now	stickers
Tight-knit neighborhood/Community (*4)	7	Businesses/Industry (*4)	8	Business Revitalization (*2)	15
Diversity/Versatility (*5)	4	Code enforcement	8	Sustainable	12
Walkability/Accessible Location (*4)	2	Lack of investment compared to the past	8	Prepared for floods/Dry (*2)	5
Action	1	Parks/Green space (*2)	7	Booming	4
People (*3)	1	Crime/Safety (*4)	6	Prosperous	4
Potential	1	Infrastructure/Truck Access/Roads (*4)	6	Semi-self-sufficient	3
Children		Access to fresh food	4	Industrious	3
History/Heritage (*4)		Improvement and investment in properties, reward property owners who make improvements (*2)	3	Walkable	2
Continuity		Sustainability	2	Thriving	2
		Modernization	2	A good place to call home	2
		Jobs	2	Busy (*2)	1
		Art	2	Affluent	1
		Housing	2	Vibrant (*3)	1
		Getting rid of the homestead exemption – two-tier tax structure kills business opportunity	1	Striving	1
		Block-by-block improvement of homes without tax increases	1	An all-inclusive, vital community	1
		Vacancies	1	Beautiful	
		Policing	1	Perfect	
		Gentrification	1	Bountiful	
		Poverty	1	Active	
		Renewables	1	Safe (*2)	
		High taxes relative to value	1	Newer Homes	
		Considered a lower class section of the city, the city needs to recognize its importance as a connective corridor	1		
		Drug issues			
		Beauty			

\*Duplicate responses have been combined